

Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has an area that equals to that of France, Holland, Belgium and Denmark combined or it is five times bigger than Vietnam, it had a population of 17 million in 1979, which is 99% Muslim {90% Sunni, 10% Shia} and 85% of this population lived in rural area having a literacy rate of 10%, there are no railways in Afghanistan, 80% of area is mountainous, it had 19000 kilometres of road out of which only 25% was paved. Afghanistan shares a 2,348 Kilometres of border with Russia on west and north, 2,180 Kilometres with Pakistan on east, 820 kilometres with Iran in south and 73 Kilometres with China in north¹

History of Afghanistan starts with the assassination of Persian Emperor Nadir Shah in 1747, Nadir Shah stands as high in history as Napoleon in later years, he expanded north and eastward, thus including the present day Afghanistan as far as beyond Oxus and in further east had Delhi under his subjugation which he plundered once.. Ahmed Khan was one of his favourite general, in the confusion that arose after the assassination; Ahmed made good use of the incoming caravan full of royal jewels and rode off to the Afghanistan, a born leader of men. He just had five hundred men with him and a treasure with this he found an empire; the present day Afghanistan, which again had Delhi under its control and all the area between Kabul and Delhi including Multan and Sind, in the north he went beyond Oxus. In the west had Persian province of Khorasan under him with Shah Rukh grand son of Nadir Shah ruling as his deputy.

Ahmed Shah was a racist, a nationalist, a fascist himself belonging to the Saddozai clan of mountain dwellers afghans who can be termed as the inhabitants of western Hindukush slopes and valleys. He proclaimed himself as Ahmed Shah 'Durr-i-Durrani' pearl of pearls; thus Abdali tribesmen became known as **Durranis** also. Within the tribe there were two major clans the Saddozai and Barakzai, the power was in the hand of Saddozai but vizier was from Barakzai to have a balance of power. Ahmed Shah died in 1773 and succeeded by his son Timur Shah who ruled peacefully for another twenty years till when he died in 1793; the rise of French Revolution, America already had its war of independence in 1776. Within the Punjab the Sikhs were on the rise having almost physical control of Lahore and its surroundings, the Mughul emperor at Delhi was a power less person in the face of two adversaries the Timur Shah or afghans in the west and British East India Company in the east in Bengal. The area along the Ganges under the Oudh was a Muslim state with its ruler nominally accepting the Mughul sovereign presence. There was hardly any force with emperor. Hindu Marhattas were the other strong hawk in the south of Delhi and eyeing the capital.

Timur Shah died leaving behind 23 sons and 13 daughters, he was succeeded by his son Zaman Shah, there were secessionist movements going on with half brother Mahmud holding Herat in the west and Humayun another half brother who was governor of Kandahar was finally beaten in the battle ground by the only real brother of Shah Zaman; the Shah Shuja.

Persia the other great empire of yesteryears was still on its own at the turn of century with Agha Muhammad being in power he had seized the Meshed which was ruled by the Shah Rukh, Meshed was the capital of Khorasan, he blinded Shah Rukh and put him in prison thus ended the Afghan control of the Persian area. This Afghan-Persian conflict which started after the rise of the Nadir Shah and later that of Ahmed Shah remained in forefront for another two hundred years. Persians with the death of Timur Shah now were on the rise and seizing the lost provinces from Afghan who naturally consider this to be their own, similar issue was to surface in Indus Valley also where after the rise of Ranjit Singh the Sikhs started getting the areas of Punjab and Kashmir along

¹ Lester Grau and Michael Gress, eds, *The Soviet Afghan War, How a superpower fought and lost a war*, Kansas university press, 2002, p, 1-5

with Multan and Peshawar. Sikhs did not have any historical claim over these only geography was their main logic, Ranjit in a way represented to Sikhs what Ahmed Shah is to Afghans.

Zaman Shah finally arrived at Lahore which in 1799 was captured by the Ranjit Singh he was received with courtesy and imperial grandeur; the Sikhs simply paid a tribute to him and Zaman in return accepted the Sikh control over Lahore. It was simple diplomacy if the Afghans were strong they would have taken back the Lahore and Mashhad by force but now settled down for nominal submission which was the eastern way of being flexible. Zaman Shah's arrival in Lahore set the course of events in action in sub continent it was alarming for the British as the Nawab of Oudh and other Muslim rulers generally look forward towards the Afghan help in the restoration of power in favour of Muslims.

Persia was important and not the Afghanistan but the corridor leading from Persia passes through the Afghanistan, it is three millennium old route from Persia which follows Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul and into India, with few passes allowing this west-east movement, water was the major issue as only very few places have water to sustain any caravan or military movement, Chagai was one such place.

Mahmud the half brother of Zaman Shah still in power at Herat was involved in a plot to assassinate the Zaman Shah but it was unearthed early thus in the end Mahmud had to flee to Persia but another Painda Khan the Barakzai sardar and vizier was put to death openly. Resultantly Painda's son Fateh Khan Barakzai joined Mahmud in Persia with a vow to avenge the death of his father. In **1801** the Mahmud marched towards Kandahar and captured it then marched into Kabul and not only captured Zaman Shah but also took his eyes out. Shuja Mulk Sadozai the only real brother of Zaman Shah was then the governor of Peshawar he thus declared his independence but he soon lost it to the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh who was closely following the civil war in Afghanistan took his time and then declared his independence too.

Mahmud Sadozai who now took over Afghanistan was a successful leader of men, he had Ghilzais the strong tribe living astride the Hindukush into subjugation, he drove back the Uzbeks who had taken over the areas south of Oxus. Shuja in the mean time had tried to defeat him in the battle field but twice lost it and settled in India. In 1802 the intrigue's in Afghanistan led to the downfall of Mahmud and Shah Shuja entered Kabul unopposed; he took his revenge and blinded Mahmud, imprisoning him in a dungeon but as the story goes the Mahmud was able to escape from it with the help of his followers; this clan loyalty runs too deep. Shah Shuja had the worst of the news at the mid night when he was informed that Mahmud has escaped from the dungeon. Mahmud was again defeated in a battle field and it was then that Shah Shuja came to Peshawar for his first meeting with the British delegation led by Mosn Stuart Elphinstone in 1809 at Peshawar.

Lord Wellesley is attributed with the brilliant piece of strategy when he devised the plan to put Persian pressure over the Zaman Shah in order to keep him out of Indian politics. The Persian monarch had earlier rejected the Afghan claim over the Mehmed rather he marched towards Herat, it was this move which compelled Zaman Shah to cut his stay in Lahore and return back to Peshawar. Captain John Malcolm led a mission to the court of Fateh Khan to put this plan into practice. This mission had two purposes one was to put pressure on the Afghan monarch and secondly to thwart any intrusion of French into the Persia due to the fear of the Napoleon adventure towards the India. The treaty signed specified this. Russia had seized the Persian provinces of Georgia and Armenia in 1804, thus Napoleon made an offer to Persia against Russia. Napoleon in the mean time had declared war on Russia in 1805 thus his proposal now had the authenticity of evidence; Fateh Shah finally succumbed to the French pressure and signed a treaty in **1807** under which he agreed to maintain an army ready to walk through Afghanistan { Kabul and Kandahar } towards India. Unfortunately Fateh Khan was bit late in his timings as Napoleon made a peace treaty with Russia in same year at the Convention of Tilsit; there was no mentioning of returning of Persian provinces back to Persia as Napoleon had earlier promised but such are the ways of warfare where the outcome of battlefield ultimately decides the fulfillment of diplomatic promises. Britain was now at war with Russia and with French as well, thus a mission was sent to Persia in 1808-09 led by the Sir Harford Jones representing the crown and

Malcolm representing the company. They increased the Fateh Kahn's subsidy and presented a diamond as well. Fateh Kahn realizing his earlier folly took the bait and came back in the British camp. It is obvious now that Persia which lay beyond the vast desert of Baluchistan far far away from their Indian border of Sutlej was still important in the global or regional politics. Thus no power was to be allowed to have any control over the neighboring countries of India. In the north the Chinese were behind the great wall of Himalaya, in the east the jungles of Burma was another barrier, *although in 1853 and then in 1861 the Burma was invaded and finally annexed in 1874 by the British India.*

Thus in **1809-09** two important missions were sent from India, one to the Persia and later the Elphinstone- Shah Shuja meeting at Peshawar. Shah Shuja was cordial although at this stage {1809} the fear of Napoleon had passed away but nevertheless at that time the importance was still there, Shah Shuja agreed to keep the French and Russians out of Afghanistan in return for a subsidy. The wheel of history turned faster and while he was still fresh from signing the treaty this half brother the blind Mahmud and Fateh Khan Barakzai marched into Kandahar, Shah Shuja had to leave Peshawar and was duly defeated at Gandamak a village west of Jalalabad. Shah Shuja escaped and sought asylum at Ludhiana where his brother Zaman Shah was already living.

Herat and Harem 1816.

Herat was governed by a half brother of Mahmud by the name of Firuz, who was partially independent, Persians had long their eyes on the Herat as they consider it to be part of their empire thus they invested heavily against Herat, in return Firuz asked for help from Kabul. Fateh Khan had been irritated by the semi independence of Firuz thus he led an army by himself and his brother Dost Muhammad which not only pushed back Persians but later in search of treasures of Firuz, Fateh Khan rather Dost Muhammad violated the sanctity of the harem, one of the ladies present was the daughter of Mahmud. This was the cause for which he despite being victorious was flayed alive, blinded and then hacked to death publicly in Kabul. This caused widespread rebellion in which Mahmud once again found himself at Herat taking refuge, he now acknowledged the suzerainty of the Persians over Herat.

Fateh Kahn had twenty one sons and Muhammad Azam Khan the eldest now occupied the power, the cultural heritage of Afghanistan is such that only the Saddozai can be ruler and Barakzai as the vizier, Shah Shuja was given the offer to be a nominal head of state but he refused. In 1826 Sikhs finally defeated the Afghans at the Battle of Nowshera which drove out the Afghans out of the plains, Ranjit however allowed one of the Barakzai to remain as the governor of Peshawar. Dost Muhammad in **186** was finally able to grab the Kabul and thus became the leading figure, his hostile brother holding the Kandahar and Peshawar with Mahmud at Herat.

Kandahar 1834.

In 1834 the Shah Shuja left Ludhiana with the consent of British at the head of 22000 Afghans to capture Kabul, he adopted the Quetta – Kandahar route, Quetta was then an Afghan province. Kandahar at that time was held by Khundil Kahn the brother of Dost Muhammad, who came to the rescue of him and defeated the Shah Shuja. Shah Shuja's forces were led by an adventurer Scot by the name of Campbell. Now Dost Muhammad after the victory proclaimed himself to be amir instead of shah and power came in the hands of Barakzai for the first time, Ranjit on the other hand had annexed Peshawar while Dost Muhammad was away at Kandahar.

Dost Muhammad first attempt soon after coronation was an attempt to conquer the Peshawar back; in a master stroke of diplomacy Ranjit met Dost Muhammad who had marched down with an

army, Ranjit was able to create dissension among the Afghan camp and Dost had to return empty hand.

1838.

By this time the Russian advance towards the east had not started yet, 1828 Russo-Persian Treaty of Turkomanchi under which the Persians acceded the loss of their frontier provinces of Georgia and Armenia which Persian tried to take back militarily but failed thus they settled for peace which put them under the Russian sphere of influence. Now the Persians were set to offset their losses by recapturing the Herat, Kandahar and Kabul their former provinces. Russians had no hesitation in backing the Persians but British were now alerted to the possible inclusion of Afghanistan under the Persians which in fact means the Russian influence.

Persian policy from 1832 till 1857 remained focused on the capture of Herat and this was the cause of the first Afghan-Anglo war. In 1832 Abbas Mirza the Persian heir apparent led and marched into Khorasan with a force aiming at restoring the authority of Shah, he finally besieged Herat then governed by the Kamran Mirza the son of Mahmud the former Shah of Afghanistan with Yar Muhammad as his vizier. Fate played its part and Abbas Mirza died thus Abbas Mirza summoned back to the Tehran, his son Mohammad Mirza thus patched up the affairs at Herat and marched back to Tehran. In the end it was Muhammad Shah who took over the reins of Persia who again marched to Herat in 1837 and that set the First Afghan War rolling.

Dost Muhammad was not strong enough to counter the Sikhs at Peshawar let alone to tackle the Persian menace at best he could tackle them one by one thus he first approached British, on the other hand his two brothers who were holding the Kandahar were alarmed at the Dost Muhammad rising power and approached the Persian and even Russians, it were the Russians who responded by sending one Captain Vitkevich to Kandahar. Lord Auckland on the other hand sends one mission headed by Alexander Burnes who had already been in Kabul as a traveler before. Thus at that point the representatives from both Britain and Russia were at Kabul, Russians were able to induce the Kandahar ruler to have an agreement with Persia, on the other hand at Kabul, Dost Muhammad kept him waiting pending the result of his agreement or talks with Burnes. The end result of these talks which accepted the suzerainty of Kabul over Peshawar with a tribute paid to Ranjit Singh and sending of an army to Herat for its defence were both rejected by Lord Auckland. 'It is impossible to avoid condemning the policy of Lord Auckland'². This drove Dost Muhammad into Russian laps who joined his brothers into the same pact. Suzerainty of Shah of Persia was acknowledged and Kabul army was promised for the capture of Herat held by Yar Muhammad in return for equal gratitude in Persian army for capture of Peshawar, Persian dominance with Russian in background on the western frontiers of India was a failure of the diplomacy and this had to be rectified.

*In order to repel the shadow the Russian aggression we had resolved to force Shah Shuja a weak and worthless exile, upon the Afghan people till then well disposed towards us and this great and unprovoked injustice the cause of all our subsequent troubles in Afghanistan was to be effected by military measures of which the rashness and folly seem at the present day almost inconceivable. The objects of the expedition were two fold, first the overthrow of the Barkzai dynasty and the restoration of Shah Shuja to the throne of his fathers; secondly the relief or capture of Herat, then besieged by the Persians with Russian countenance and aid.*³

² Sir Percy Skyes, Mortimer Durand, p-72

³ Sir Percy Skyes, Mortimer Durand, p-73. The italics represent the writing of Sir Henry Mortmev who took part in the Afghan war and was later Foreign Secretary of India. He wrote the Official history of the First Afghan War which was published in 1879.

1840, War.

Plan was to have 20,000 British troops to march from Ferozpur towards the Kandahar through the Sind covering a distance of 850 miles, Kandahar to Herat another 380 miles, total of 1200 miles. Edward Pottinger was a British officer who had reached the Herat in disguise and later helped in the improvement of garrison defenses. British army passes through Bolan Pass after much suffering and pain it stood to its name and reached Kandahar and defeated the governor Kuhendil Khan, Shah Shuja was formally inaugurated as the Shah of Afghanistan. General Sir Keane was the commander in chief of this force and Sir William McNaughton his political advisor, they next move towards Ghazni. At Ghazni the Henry Mortimer Durand shine and later he was responsible in leading an assault on the city through Kabul gate, a medal was later inaugurated in his name, Sir Keane was created Baron Keane of Ghazni. In August 1840 British marched into Kabul, Dost Muhammad had already fled the scene and took asylum with Amir of Bukhara, Dost Muhammad later surrendered to British after three months.

The force consisted of two infantry divisions, of which the first, commanded by Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton, contained three brigades, commanded respectively by Colonels Sale, Nott, and Dennis. Major-General Duncan commanded the second infantry division of the two brigades, of which one was commanded by Colonel Roberts, the other by Colonel Worsley. The 6000 troops raised for Shah Soojah, who were under Fane's orders, and were officered from British army in India, had been recently and hurriedly recruited, and although rapidly improving, were not yet in a state of high efficiency. The contingent which the Bombay Presidency was to furnish to the 'Army of the Indus,' and which landed

about the close of the year near the mouth of the Indus, was under the command of General Sir John Keane, the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay army. The Bombay force was about 5000 strong. General Fane the commander in chief had never taken kindly to the project, declined to associate himself with the diminished array that remained. The command of the Bengal column fell to Sir Willoughby Cotton, with whom as his aide-de-camp rode that Henry Havelock whose name twenty years later was to ring through India and England. Duncan's division was to stand fast at Ferozepore as a support, by which disposition the strength of the Bengal marching force was cut down to about 9500 fighting men. After its junction with the Bombay column, the army would be 14,500 strong, without reckoning the Shah's contingent.

At length, on December 10th, 1838, Cotton began the long march which was not to terminate at Cabul until August 6th of the following year. The chosen route was by the left bank of the Sutlej to its junction with the Indus, down the left bank of the Indus to the crossing point at Roree, and from Sukkur across the Scinde and northern Belooch provinces by the Bolan and Kojuk passes to Candahar, thence by Khelat-i-Ghilzai and Ghuznee to Cabul. . On the way the column would have to effect a junction with the Bombay force, which at Vikkur was distant 800 miles from Ferozepore. Of the distance of 850 miles from the latter post to Candahar the first half to the crossing of the Indus presented no serious difficulties, but from Sukkur beyond the country was inhospitable and cruelly rugged. Marching through Bhawalpore and Northern Scinde, without noteworthy incident save heavy losses of draught cattle, Cotton's army reached

Roree, the point at which the Indus was to be crossed, in the third week of January 1839

Fallout of First Afghan War. The British instead of withdrawing opted to stay at Kabul. It was more of imperial mindset than anything else, for the trading company and for Lord Auckland it was the high point where a colony has been made in the extreme west. McNoughton the political officer now started playing the politics but it backfired miserably. The cost of expedition was the paramount and all efforts were made to reduce it. Even now the austerity drives of many countries usually starts from cutting the allowances and perks of junior officials which normally have no or very little bearing on the overall costs. In Afghanistan or more particularly in the orient the allowances paid to the tribes are the best surety of peace, the allowances of key tribes including the Ghilzais were cut down, it was done more drastically in the autumn of 1841, Ghilzais occupies the area

between the Kabul and Jalalabad ; Brigadier Sale was move from Kabul to overcome this rebellion which he did after hot clash which resulted in his being closed in the Gandamak Fort.

British garrison at Kabul was attacked and Burnes was killed, General Elphinstone was weak and indecisive, Akbar Khan a son of Dost Muhammad was calling the shot, a safe passage was promised to the British garrison , the British finally started their march in mid winter and none survived except one surgeon Brydon. Shah Shuja was killed outside his Kabul palace, in the end Zaman Khan a nephew of Dost Muhammad was proclaimed as amir overlooking the Akbar Kahn .

A British retaliatory force was assembled under General Frederick Pollock at Peshawar, it forced its way through Khyber Pass and relieved Jalalabad it later moved to Kabul burnt down the bazaar on 15th September 1842 before defeating Ghilzais at Battle of Jagdallak, he was joined by General Nott who had held the Kandahar in all these turbulent days, both later returned to Peshawar and Kabul was left to its own. Dost Muhammad made his comeback and was accepted as thre ruler of Afghanistan by his own people.

Russian Advance; 1842-1878

The Russian advance towards the east was as natural as the British advance towards west. From 1838 onwards the Russians set on course towards the east. The causes of Russian advance are similar to the reason of British anxiety on its frontiers mainly the rising and constant attacks /raids on its territories. In 1844 sea of Aral was explored and in 1847 a fort was constructed at the mouth of Syr Darya. With this fort in 1855 Aik Masjid an important fortress of Khokand Khanate was overran; it was 200 miles upstream. Crimean war was a temporary friction on the east ward movement, in 1865 Tashkent was captured and now the important khanate of Khiva and Bokhara were threatened while Khokand was already taking its last breath. Bokhara was defeated in 1868 Samarkand was occupied and Khokand was shatter into history in 1876, three years earlier Khiva was overrun without any opposition . Thus by 1876 the threat of Russia which was considered as mind fantasy in 1838 was now a reality.

Dost Muhammad {d1863}.

Dost Muhammad Barakzai can be conferred as the father of modern Afghanistan , the kingdom which Ahmad Shah Abdalli had set up in 1750 had shattered in its basic ingredients within a quarter of century after the death of great man in 1773. Now the power was in the hands of able vizier Barakzai clan. Dost Muhammad's greatest feat is in uniting the Afghanistan which he did in 1863 before his death.

Twenty years he ruled after the British folly of 1840. He showed the great astute which is manifested with the Vizier in the orient. It is a great continuation of history that family who are trusted with single purpose by the ruler have kept that traits intact. Look at Viziers of Ranjit Singh the great Faqir brothers who were mastermind in many of the treaties conducted with the British and Afghans. The era of blood shed which was so predominant in the Mughul era especially in the Aurangzeb was replaced with a mixture of western and eastern philosophy and in this the vizier played important role in all the dynasties. Dost Muhammad had the same blood running in his veins in which decisions are made with logic rather than the emotion a feat so commonly attached with the ruling families. Dost opened up with British after the annexation of Punjab in 1849 by them . The Anglo –Sikh wars had finally put the British as the sole power with whom Afghans had to deal with. Dost in the 1848 had finally thrown his dice with the Sikhs when he sent 4000 cavalry troops for their battle against the British at Gujarat; but they could not turn the day in favour of Afghans or Sikhs. Had the outcome of that battle been different than Dost Muhammad would have put forward his stake on Peshawar and boundaries would have been drawn back to 1799 era.

In 1855 Dost Muhammad had the first diplomatic opening with British which resulted in a treaty in 1857 with Lawrence of Punjab at Peshawar. Persian move against Herat in 1857 was another

factor in his favour, Persians had captured the Herat and British were anxious to keep them out but instead of repeating the folly of 1840 they induced Dost Muhammad to carry out the same task at a subsidy of 10,000 pounds per month as long as he remains engaged with conflict along with weapons the most prized by Afghans. In the end Persians were driven out of Herat mainly due to British naval action at Bushire and Muhmamerah. After Dost Muhammad's death anarchy once again spread in the country with rival brothers putting claim on the kingship in the end Sher Ali came out as winner but for short time as in 1867 he was back in the fortress of Herat taking refuge from his brother who had captured the Kabul, his usurpers include his half brother Afzal Khan who died soon and replaced by another half brother Azim Khan and Abdur Rehman.; soon they all were driven out and Sher Afzal was back in Kabul in 1868.

British had adopted a wise policy of masterly inactivity in which they remain aloof from the internal politics of Afghanistan but when Sher Ali was back in Kabul and had quelled all the mutinies then viceroy presented him with a subsidy of 60,000 pounds and same amount next year. In modern times it can be termed as grant which in those days and even now is an accepted mode of accepting one's sovereignty. In 1869 Sher Ali came down via Peshawar to meet Lord Mayo at Umballa in Punjab; he was given a grand reception and farewell.

Russian Intervention 1978

In April 1978 the Russian backed left wing coup in Afghanistan resulted in a wide spread social reforms that included education of women as well, soon the tribal society took up arms as it was against their customs. By 1979 the rebels had captured major town and even regular Afghan army started defecting, in line with 'Breznev doctrine' the Russian army came into Afghanistan on the request of state, internationally USA had lost Iran and all its listening posts against Russia thus a major military invasion from them in area was on card.

Soviet Union

Russian 40th army with a strength of 81,800 troops having two motorized divisions, one airborne division, one air assault brigade, two motorised regiments, under the name of Limited Contingent of Soviet Forces (LCOS) all in all having over hundred combat units supported by requisite number of aircraft and gunships⁴ crossed over the international border at 1200 GMT 25th December 1979 and was in position by mid January 1980, Its primary aim was to relieve the Afghan army of garrison duties and to push them and support them in fighting the insurgency.

Mujahedeen

Mujahedeen is an Arabic word which means 'one who fights in Allah's way'⁵ the religious authorities who wielded great power declared Jihad (holy war) against the Soviets because they are infidels thus created a frenzy among population. The insurgency was already there against the Afghan army by over a dozen parties who all were styled on linguistic, ethnic, sectarian and tribal hierarchy, majority of them were educated professionals like Hikmat Yar and Ahmed Shah Masood both university graduates and other like Moulvi Khalis and Rabbani were religious preachers. These mujahedeen were based on locality and village concept similar to 'German hundred' concept and had varying strength of 200-2000, majority were interested in looting and raiding. Some of them were based in Pakistan for logistic reasons. Mujahedeen were unpaid religious volunteer fighters.

First Phase 1980-1984

⁴ Ibid p.17-18

⁵ Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin *The Battle for Afghanistan, the Soviets versus the Mujahadeen during the 1980s*, (Pen and Sword, Yorkshire, 2007), p,33

Initially mujahedeen continued their way of fighting as they were doing against the afghan army ie attacking in large number and holding the area and positions but soon they suffered heavy casualties and resorted to combat bands of 20-150 mujahedeen. The major area of interest was attacking the convoys by ambush. Mujahedeen were underarm ,in one instance in 1980 a group of ten mujahedeen ambush a 'soviet convoy of over forty trucks by using two RPG-7 and three AK-47'⁶ and same pattern was observed all over the country . Soviets responded with battalion size retaliation forces that would carry out the sweep of the area supported by gunship, The soviet analysis later revealed that their 'inherent adherence to conventional style of fighting and training was inadequate to answer the problem'⁷. In one instance a soviet battalion was ambushed while clearing a village as it failed to clear the flanks 'as the fire came from the top , we remained paralysed for minutes , none could give even order to fire as we all waited for senior officer to do so'⁸

This pattern of small level hit and run was most common and caused constant bleeding of the soviets.

Yet in Panjsher valley the pattern was different, mujahedeen under Masood held the valley and fought pitched battles with soviets, this 90 miles long valley is almost a hundred kilometres north of Kabul and controls the strategic Salang Highway, the life line of Russian forces. For eight years the soviets launched over nine major attacks all having excess of division plus forces supported by bombers, fighters and gunships yet they failed to overcome a group of not more than five thousand mujahedeen under Masood who came to be known as 'Lion Of Panjsher'.

By 1981 Pakistan was supporting the mujahedeen with arms, the Reagan administration was also active but no American weapons were provided rather Russian weapons from third source were given .China, Egypt, Italy, Britain, Saudi Arabia and UAE were providing the funds and weapons. 'In 1983 some 10,000 tons of ammunition was provided to guerrillas'⁹. Inter service Intelligence of Pakistan was the brain but mujahedeen were not yet united neither they had any centralised command or doctrine, it was fight for the sake of fight.

Russians adopted themselves to the new realities by changing their tactics and now relied on all means. They bombed the villages to deny the food, they adopted scorched earth policy, they resorted to winning of heart and mind policy and even had a year of truce with Masood .Militarily they did not increase their strength .

Second phase 1985-1989

In this phase the Russian underwent political changes back home and LCOS were given a year in field {1986} to either win or be ready for withdrawal thus intense heavy fighting was conducted. Both sides were now experienced and knew each other strength and weakness. In 1985 the Russians did increase their military strength but it was marginal. As one Russian officer wrote 'By 1985 the mujahedeen became masters of stubbornly retaining highly defensible area and attacking our forces with ambushes'¹⁰.

Russian thus conducted one of the most fierce attacks in Panjsher valley and adopted new tactics of using gun ships for landing assault troops at heights, multiple axis attacks, and above all surprise. 1985 was the bloodiest in the whole campaign and balance was in soviet favour. Brigadier Yousaf admits 'through out mid -1985...our attempts to take Khost had failed, we had suffered casualties, soviet high command had apparently gained initiative'¹¹. The stinger shoulder fired missile changed the complexion of war, rarely has one weapon made such a drastic outcome to any war.

⁶ Ali Jalali and Lester Grau, *Afghan Guerrilla Warfare in the words of the Mujahideen fighters*, {MBI, Minnesota, 2001}, p, 5-6

⁷ Lester and Gress *Soviet Afghan War*, p, 19

⁸ Lester Grau, *The Bear went over the Mountains, Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan*, {Frank Cass, London, 1996}, p, 2-4

⁹ Yousaf, and Adkin *Battle for Afghanistan*, p, 86-98

¹⁰ Lester Grau *Bear went over Mountains*, p 31-32.

¹¹ Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, p, 164-166

Mujahedeen got stingers in 1986 and 'shot down six gunships in one encounter'¹² this changed the scenario to some extent, moreover mujahedeen were now more disciplined and their attacks were now coordinated thanks to Pakistan who brokered a seven parties alliance among them and kept it intact despite in house feuds.

The Satakonda attack is a classic as it displays some flavour of the war ,it took place in 1987 when almost a whole Russian division tried to open up Khost-Gardez road which was under mujhadeen control since 1980,in the words of one mujahedeen commander

*we took hold of the two passes and had our positions on high ground, and laid three tier mine belts on the hair pin road.....yet Russians achieved surprise their gun ships landed air assault troops on high grounds and they bombed our villages,we were forced by enemy to move further up the mountains, we were dying of thirst ...we launched twelve prong attack and finally Russians left the valley and also heavy luggage.*¹³

Analysis

Soviet Union was a military super power and had a rich strategic military culture thus it is illogical to assume that they did not studied the Malay and Vietnam campaigns, rather in subsequent time period they employed all the lessons, they tried to win the heart and minds of people by giving amnesty, tried to split the mujahedeen by having peace accord for a year with Masood in Panjsher Valley, they used ruthless force as well ,isolated the mujahedeen from local population through food denial policy and scorched earth ,crops, orchids, oasis were bombed and sprayed. Anti personnel mines were an innovative idea whereby they instead of killing rather maimed the mujahedeen thus not only decimating fighting potential but also ensuring another couples of mujahedeen who will attend the injured are put out of action.

Russian from the start had few serious limitations, namely the conscription and under strength regiments coupled with poor training. The soldier had to serve for two years in army and mostly joined Afghanistan after few weeks without even having fired the weapons, their living conditions in Afghanistan were poor and many were 'caught selling their weapons to mujhadeen',¹⁴ most importantly the army as a whole was trained and cultured for a war in Europe and not for counterinsurgency in a mountainous terrain

The soviets tactics did evolved from the experience, they inducted mountain battalions later and initiated a mountain training school and things improved to an extent that by 1985 they were looking for a victory, it changed with the induction of stinger shoulder fired missile which negated their main tactical advantage of gun ships.

Soviets apparently had a limited political aim, they never attacked the bases inside Pakistan which were the mujahideen's strength and neither did they increased their force level drastically, as American did it in Vietnam where they had over half a million force for an area one fifth of Afghanistan.

Guerrillas {mujahideen} from the beginning were fighting on tribal issues of honour loyalty and religious zeal, their tactics were centuries old proven methods of guerrillas mainly ambush and raids which they conducted with brilliance and courage ,as early as 1980 they were hitting the convoys. The initial tactics of fighting in large numbers and conventional style soon proved fatal and they resorted to minor groups intent upon bleeding the enemy without any strategic aim, they till 1984 remained in factions and seldom supported each other rather at times they fought with each other, despite suffering heavy casualties from soviets in term of percentage of killed they remained in fighting spirits.

¹² Ibid p.174-178

¹³ Jalali and Lester, *Afghan Guerrilla Warfare*, p,165-173.

¹⁴ Ibid, p,371

They adopted their own drills and tactics ,like making mines from unexploded Russian bombs ,laying ambushes to the gun ships and attacking and defending strong points. Bombing urban areas, kidnapping Russians were also their salient points. Their main advantage was in being light weight and having almost negligible logistics tail ,they were excellent shots, scouts and courageous in nature, in brief they were modern day Spartans with a dash of zealots and Jewoh's convents but with a much higher tendency towards violence and ruthlessness.

Foreign Aid

Mujahedeen were supported by the Pakistan ,America and other western allies ,the presence of having a strong base in Pakistan was of great help, they were provided with training and new weapons apart from medical and intelligence guidelines. Over 5 million refugees were in Pakistan. The pipe line of logistics ran very long and thus mujahedeen had to occupy and defend their forward bases in close vicinity to border ,the aid of heavy weapons from western also posed problems as it increased the pay load of a fighter, it was result of these two that mujahedeen suffered their heavy casualties in 1987 and 1988 in Khost province.

Conclusion

The loss of Roman Legion in 'Teutoberger Forest'¹⁵ cannot be attributed to lack of training on part of roman army ,similarly the Russian with drawl from Afghanistan was not a weakness of the army but it was the strength of the mujahedeen that resulted in this milestone .It was clash of two military strategic cultures, the Russian's revolved around mass numbers ,technology, fire power, combine arm tactics and manoeuvre , centralised disciplined force, lack of individual initiative, and living in civilised environments. Soviets lost 13,833 men and other 43000 were wounded, they also lost 118 jets,333 helicopters,147 tanks,433 artillery pieces and 11,369 trucks¹⁶.

On the other hand was a primitive culture relying upon individual skill, courage, faith, mobility, swiftness, less logistic weight ,individual initiative, pride and inherent military training .This was the major difference between two rivals and in the end primitive culture prevailed upon technology because terrain suited it and local population was behind the ideology which was based upon religion.

Mujahideen could have been defeated had Russian opted for a total war,a war without any morals or ethics based upon total utilisation of their force and fire power but in the end every war has one aim ;peace and that is never possible when total force is used,yet it cannot absolved the Russian forces from the fact that they failed to overcome the mujahideen thus it is pertinent to conclude that Russian forces were not geared for guerrilla warfare.

Enduring Freedom

It is the code name of the on going operation of America against the terrorist who launched the successful and most lethal attack on American soil in its living memory and also in written history. Repercussions had to be there and they had to be quick and a lesson for all to know . 'We may be the only one left in this war, that's ok with me , we are Americans' President George Bush after the attacks commented¹⁷,this much Bush was sure that is Osama Bin laden and his Al-Qaeeda behind this attack but he did not had the proof and neither he needed one at this time, he wanted him out dead or alive. Osama was in Afghanistan a land locked country ,barren, desolate about the size of Bush home state Texas. Afghan are to some historians the 12th lost tribe of Moses. Present day Afghanistan took birth as an after shoot of Great Game when British after suffering the most devastating defeat in

¹⁵ Hans Delbruck,*The Barbarian Invasion*,{Nebraska University Press,London,1990},p,69-95.

¹⁶ Lester Grau ,*Bear went over Mountains*,p,xix

¹⁷ Bob Woodward, *Bush At War*,{ New York, Simon & Schuster,2002},p,81.

military history when only one survived out of a force of 16000 in 1839 and later again suffering similar fate in 1879 finally relinquished their claim and demarcated the Indian subcontinent into Afghanistan and British India with a 'Durand Line' running on the crest of mountains, naturally tribes never accepted and neither respected it.

There are twelve major tribes who lived on the eastern border more famous are Afridis, Khattaks, Shinwaris, Mohmand, Mahsuds, Wazirs and Orakzai. They are pashtun by ethnicity and these pashtuns are about 20 million in number¹⁸{9 million in Afghanistan and other in Pakistan} the other major ethnic group of Afghanistan are the northern tribes who are Uzbek and Tajik they differ in appearance from pashtun as they have more mongol blood line, the binding factor is the religion Islam in which they are again having varying difference, the northerners having moderate view and pashtuns having extremist view point. Soviet Union tried to cultivate Marxist ideas in Afghanistan in 1979 and later invaded as well with over 85000 troops but retreated after eight years and having suffered 55000 casualties thanks mainly to American military aid to tenacious afghans and their brethren Arabs mujahedeen for whom it was a religious war the Jihad. After soviet departure the tribes fought among each other and finally in 1994 the student 'Taliban' revolution took place in which the veteran front line Mujahedeen who were now mainly spending life in an anarchic environments by teaching religion to orphans' of the war in the Pashtun tribes led by one eyed Mullah Omar of Kandhar and his close mujahedeen who almost all had lost either a leg or hand in Jihad started the drive and within three months they virtually had the half of Afghanistan under their control. And by 2001 were in control of whole except a valley under northern tribe.

Laden is probably the most romantic rebel, guerrilla, terrorist of all time, he seems to be reincarnation of 12th century Hasan bin Sabah and his assassins. Laden was twenty six and a billionaire¹⁹ when he came to Peshawar from Saudi Arabia {the way Che Guerra went to Bolivia} and soon Osama became the most fierce fighter followed maniacally especially by his Arabs and other Mujahedeen's. After the war Osama soon became disillusioned with Afghan civil war and also of Saudi royal family and settled in Yemen from where he conducted a series of spectacular attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and than migrated to Afghanistan now under Taliban.

Mullah Omar demanded a proof from Bush later however Omar agreed to put Osama on an open court of international justice, both demand rejected by Bush. Between 11th September- 7th October 2001 the Central Command of America {Centcom} under whose area of operation Afghanistan falls carried out all appreciation and put forward three plans²⁰, the first one calls for destruction through air power only but finally the presence of ground troops and destruction using air power was approved.

Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld admitted 'the hard fact was that America could not operate in Afghanistan without having allies'²¹ The fact was Afghanistan was not a country at all, there were no target to be hit as in conventional states or as in Iraq. President Bush remarked 'whats the fun in hitting a \$ 10 tent with \$ 200 million worth cruise missile'²². There was no electricity, command and control centres, air defence weapons, telecommunication etc what little was there it was not affecting anything, what was present on ground were 60,000 Taliban, a thousand of Osama Arab warriors and potential million pashtuns in tribes all ready to wage another war.

A quick glance through history confirmed Americans that Afghanistan is not a push over. All neighbouring countries were coerced like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan into giving bases and all other support for which American paid and wrote off old loans. This is where a new way of

¹⁸ Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Bernard, Peter Chalk {Arlington, Rand, 2004}, pp, 286-293

¹⁹ Jason Burke, Al-Qaeeda The True Story of Radical Islam, London, Penguin, 2004, pp 28-55

²⁰ Michael Delong, Inside Centcom, The Unvarnished Truth About the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Washington, Regency, 2004, pp, 27-39

²¹ Bob Woodward, Plan of attack, London, Simon & Schuster, pp, 6-14,

²² Ibid

warfare in American military history took birth. instead of simply landing the troops in Afghanistan or bombing it into rubble the Americans paid the northern alliance money to wage war against the talibans with their{USA}aerial support. It was a unique war where the first Americans to land were Central intelligence Agency field operatives followed by the special operation forces whose main task was to guide the American bombers to the target with the help of laser guided equipment. By 23rd December 2001 Kabul was captured by the Northern Alliance and soon American forces started landing in Afghanistan in numbers. Taliban simply fled to their stronghold in Kandhar and took refuge in mountains with Americans following hot on their heels supported by British and Northern Tribes. The Taliban and the wanted Laden escaped through the mountains towards the east and into eastern tribes of Pakistan. Some pitched battles and operations took place like 'Operation Anaconda' and heavy bombing in Tora Bora mountains.

Pakistan was coerced into deploying its almost two corps along the border to stop the Talibans fleeing and from this point onwards an intricate and delicate situation took birth. Pakistan denied Americans right to cross into its territory in hot pursuit of Talibans and rather took it self to hunt them down but Americans were not satisfied with this arrangements yet they conceded to Pakistan, for an outsider it looks extremely enigmatic that the biggest super power on god's earth is unable to chase the Taliban and hunt them down in primitive mountains. The answer lies in following.

Pakistan is a nuclear state with a population of over 150 million with 97% Muslim and over 3 million Christians²³, the biggest in an Islamic country, the country due to prolong military rules have become a nursery of radical Islam and ongoing guerrilla movement in Kashmir against India finally resulted in Indians amassing their forces on border in 2002 for a showdown with Pakistan. As soon as American bombing campaign started in Afghanistan there were wide spread mass demonstration in Pakistan although not as violent as expected. USA had the following option ,either to launch a ground operation from Afghanistan onto the tribal area and in ensuing expect high casualties, launch an air campaign for a prolong period during which the population might revolt against the existing friendly regime and finally USA could have allowed the India to launch the attack from the east and simultaneously itself launch attack on the tribes. But all these had catastrophic consequences thus USA adopted the same strategy as they adopted in initial routing of Taliban, they simply paid Pakistan to wage their war and simultaneously put the tribal area under aerial observation and conducted joint operations with Pakistan army. Americans trained Pakistan army into night vision fighting by providing helicopters{almost 40 Bell 412 and 20 cobras²⁴}and later training them in USA as well. New militia force was raised with American funding, intelligence was also shared.

Between 2002-2006 almost three hundred hard core Al-Qaeeda operatives have been arrested in Pakistan and over 80% of all wanted persons have been arrested in Pakistan by USA but all this has come at a very high price. From 2002 the attacks on Christian community started increasing in which church and schools were targeted, all foreign national became a target of suicide or kidnap attempts. In June 2002 eleven French engineers were killed in suicide attack and later American journalist Daniel pearl was butchered, Pakistan army itself became target of suicide attacks and one three star general has been killed and other has been injured apart from over 200 other all ranks killed in various attacks. A series of bomb and suicide attacks virtually paralysed the country and brought it to anarchy. The public support especially in tribal areas started increasing for the talibans, this was mainly due to the religious ties and also as an reaction of American operation in the tribal area, the Americans at times as in 2003 Bajour area operated and fired missile on suspected hideouts of Taliban in Pakistan territory which killed over a dozen civilian population.

America thus found itself in a catch-22 situation ,if they attack on suspected habitats in tribal area than they can face high casualties of their own troops and a possible repercussion and public lashing from Pakistan and if it goes unchecked than a coup or anarchy can take place, on the other hand if they simply allow Pakistan Army to carry out operation inside Pakistan on American intelligence than the results might take time, one additional factor was that almost all Al-Qaeeda

²³ ,Angel,Muslim World,pp 254-256

²⁴ Azam and Cheema,History of Pakistan Army Aviation,Islamabad,Army Press,2008, pp 348-378

members got underground in the major cities. Thus America opted for a combination of both ,it does not operate within Pakistan territory yet it violates airspace as and when required and it also allows Pakistan army and intelligence agencies to operate at their own.

Winning Heart and Mind. In October 2005 the Northern Areas of Pakistan were hit by a massive earthquake and Americans led the way in the biggest helicopter rescue relief operation in the history 'Operation Lifeline'²⁵. In same year the Swat area of Pakistan underwent a radical change when people started an armed campaign to have Islamic laws in their territory and called themselves as 'Taliban' soon it became a full fledged armed resistance and employed a corps of Pakistan army. In December 2007 the Pakistan underwent a shock when twice premier Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in a political rally by hardliners, for next three days there was no writ of state in Pakistan, later in elections the ex army chief and president Musharraf was defeated in parliamentary elections and soon democracy return to power. This presented new dilemma to USA as although it champions democracy yet it believes in rhetoric in this aspect as far as Islamic states are concerned because in true democratic state it is the will of people that has to be prevailed and people are generally against American policy . In 2009 the Pakistan made a compromise with the Talibans in the Swat area which is highly criticised in America.

²⁵ Ibid, pp 400-412